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## BULGARIA UNDER TSAR SIMEON.

By the end of the 7th century the Balkan Bulgars possessed settled political and social institutions and a well-developed juridical system.

At the head of a horde of twenty to thirty thousand, Asparukh or Isperikh, one of the sons of Kubrat, had first appeared along the shores of Lake Azov and the Black Sea, had then advanced towards Onglos—perhaps also the island of Pevki at the mouth of the Danube—and, according to some authorities, had even penetrated into a corner of Bessarabia (Budzhak). He then crossed the Danube and launched an attack against the Byzantine Emperor, Constantine IV. He gained a victory, and in 679 made a formal agreement with Byzantium by which the latter acknowledged the authority of the Bulgars over the districts occupied by him and his following.

The newcomers from the steppes proceeded to consolidate the Slavonic tribes which had arrived more than two centuries before from their Carpathian home and were then living, scattered and disunited, in Moesia, Thrace and Macedonia. This they were easily able to do as it is likely that among them were not only Bulgarians, but also Slavs, Finns and other primitive peoples who had been welded together under the administrative and military hegemony of their sovereign lord.

The first Bulgar Empire extended approximately from the mouth of the Danube to Timok in the west and the Balkans in the south. After a halt in Preslavev, Pliska-Aboba was selected for permanent residence and subsequently became the capital. This was the territory inhabited earlier by the oldest peoples of the Peninsula, the Thracians and Illyrians, and invaded by various barbarians, including Goths, Huns and Avars. The still earlier conquests and colonisation of the Romans had also left lasting traces and an advanced material culture (roads, caravan-serais, temples, baths, mines, fortresses, etc.).

The Slavonic element forms the backbone of the Bulgarian nation. Although split up into numerous small divisions and clans under their several princelings and chieftains, the Slavs of all parts of the Peninsula were already leading a settled and

uniform life and had engaged in agriculture and stock-rearing, before the advent of Asparukh. They had democratic institutions of their own, and in time of war when there was need of defending themselves against attack, they elected their leaders, captains and princes. Although they had a common language, customs and civilisation, yet they were politically divided, as we know from the testimony of such Byzantine chronicles as Prokopios (d. 562). The Slavs of Moesia welcomed the discipline and military organisation of Asparukh's force and did not hesitate to afford him their entire co-operation in his efforts to establish and consolidate a single, strong empire. The aim both of the Slavs and of the newcomers was to press southwards against Byzantium; it was this common interest which led to the conclusion of an alliance, or pact, as Theophanes calls it.

The Bulgars—the unifiers of the Slav tribes, to use Drinov's term—can hardly all have been of Turanian or Hun origin. It is most likely that Asparukh's forces contained also Slavs, and the Slavs were naturally instrumental in creating an easy understanding between the foreigners and the natives—thus playing a part similar to that of the Varangian Russians or the Germanic Franks. They did not attempt to impose their constitutional, social or legal customs on the more numerous Slavs of the Peninsula, but concentrated their energy on empire-building. The process of assimilation by the Slavs now began to take place, and it is likely that they had assumed the name of the Bulgars and adopted their type of administrative and political organisation within a century.

Krum (802–814) carried on the vigorous policy of his predecessors, Asparukh, Tervel (701–718) and Telerik (768–777). He consolidated their conquests in Thrace and Macedonia, united Dacia and Moesia, occupied Sredec and, in general, made a great step forward in the political unification of the Southern Balkans. His policy was skilfully and successfully continued by Omortag (814–832), who subdued a number of outlying tribes.

In their early preparatory period the royal power was in the hands of a khan or prince. Neither the central administration shared by advisers with Turanian or Asiatic titles (*tarkhan*, *kavgan*, *kopan*, *bogatur*, *vagain*, *kolovrus*, etc.), nor the new district administration, in which old Slav titles were preserved (*vojvoda* or duke, *župan* or clan chief, *vladelec* or ruler, *čelnik* or elder, *knjaz* or prince), altered the democratic order and the customary law code which regulated the behaviour of the diverse Slav tribes. The khan was not an absolute monarch. His authority was limited.

by the council of *bolyars* or nobles, of whom we hear from the Byzantine chronicles. In the provinces, especially the villages, the rulings of the local councils and gatherings continued to hold good in matters affecting the social and national life. General councils were also summoned. There were no special castes or strata, though a gradual and natural division into *bolyars*, traders, field-workers, stock-raisers, etc., arose, and it was very likely in this period that, in imitation of Byzantine custom, *paroikoi*, *otroks* and technical workers made their appearance as definite classes. But there were no slaves, as we are authoritatively informed by the Byzantine chronicles. All military and civil offices were open, though they were generally given to those in close touch with the ruler or to the dukes and other soldiers who had distinguished themselves in war.

There was no written law, but legal precedent was strictly observed and executed. From remote times, the Slavs had lived in clan-like families or *zadrugas*. A collection of such *zadrugas* and houses formed a *župa* or clan. In times of danger resort was had to a *grad* or fort, chosen for its natural strategical advantages, constructed in an inaccessible, marshy place and fenced about with dikes and ramparts, and strengthened with wattles. As the *zadruga* was controlled by its chief, so was the clan by a clan chief. The division of labour was decided at the councils, which were attended by all the members of the families. Justice was executed in the house court and village courts and by the clan chief. The prince was the chief judge. The law of revenge and reprisals was the chief characteristic of justice.

In course of time this order of things changed. The Slav tribes gradually became a political whole, and Byzantine influences began to make themselves felt. In Krum's time a legislature, heralded by a national council, grew up, as we are told by the chronicler Suidas. We must assume that even in heathen times there existed, side by side with the law of revenge, a justice administered by the princes and a system of fines and impositions for wrong-doing. The home hearth continued to remain the centre of social life. In addition to the *bolyars*, the townsmen and the villagers, there were also some independent persons, *ratays* or farm hands, whose position was parallel to and influenced by the corresponding class of the Byzantine *paroikoi* or Roman colonists.

## THE REIGN OF SIMEON.

Simeon (893-937) was the heir of his father Boris (852-89), under whom Bulgaria was officially converted to Christianity. The conversion of the Court of Preslav marks a new epoch. The preparatory political period is already over, and unification now makes great advances through the all-powerful influence of a common religion and the new Byzantine culture. Of the two civilisations, the Western or Roman and the Eastern or Byzantine, the latter gains the day among the Bulgarian Slavs, and the influence is perceptible in every branch of social life. The development of writing both in Preslav (which replaced Pliska-Aboba as the capital) and in distant Ohrid (the western centre of culture) enhanced the Bulgarian power not only in the eyes of Byzantium, but of all the then known world. After Boris, Simeon continued to extend the Empire, which now embraced Moesia, Thrace, Macedonia, part of Albania and Bessarabia and a section of Dacia. Simeon, who had been educated at Constantinople and was thoroughly familiar with Byzantium's position, perfectly understood the rôle which Bulgaria could and should play in the Balkans and the Near East; he aimed at establishing himself in Constantinople, occupying the Imperial throne and welding together all the Balkan countries under his own sceptre. He proclaimed himself "Tsar of the Bulgarians and Greeks," thus claiming equality with an Eastern βασιλεὺς and a Roman Emperor.

Under Boris, and still more under Simeon, the independence of the Bulgarian Church began to be established, and a new class arose—the clergy, whose higher ranks were on a par with the privileged bolyars. A new legal authority came into prominence, the ecclesiastical court, whose influence on the lay courts made itself felt, even if it did not greatly affect the customary law of the masses.

Bulgaria's relations with the neighbouring peoples were not too peaceful. She warred against Byzantium, joined issue in the north with the Avars, Finns, Magyars and Pechenegs, and had military encounters with the Serbs and Croats, whose territory lay to the north-west. The Bulgarian ruler made peaceful treaties and agreements with Byzantium, with Slavonic Moravia and Pannonia, and with the German rulers.

Simeon raised the prestige of the country, helped the development of literature and persistently aimed at the realisation of a programme which had the four following points: (1) the improve-

ment of national education ; (2) the independence and nationalisation of the Church ; (3) the unification and centralisation of the Empire ; and (4) the attainment for himself of the title of Emperor (Tsar), and for the head of the Church that of Patriarch. All his contemporaries and modern historians rate very highly the services and personal qualities of this Emperor, whose reign is called " The Golden Age of Bulgarian history."

#### THE BULGARIAN EMPIRE : TERRITORY AND BOUNDARIES.

The territory between the Black Sea and the Timok, the Danube and the Balkan range, formed the nucleus of the first Bulgarian Empire. It was not, however, particularly stable geographically, and until the preliminary period was over there were many movements and shiftings ; the boundaries were extended or contracted in accordance with the gains or losses of the particular rulers, and there were Slavonic elements in the Peninsula which were never subject to Bulgarian rule.

Under Tervel and Telerik, and still more under Krum, the boundaries reached the Transylvanian Carpathians in the north, Erkesia in the south—the *μεγάλη τάφρος* or great dyke, which extended from the Gulf of Burgas to the River Tundža—and to parts of Macedonia in the west.

Under Simeon, the Empire was greater than it has ever been since. In the north it extended to " beyond the River Danube " (*βουλγαρία ἐκείθεν τοῦ ἰστρον ποταμοῦ*), including the modern Eastern Hungary, Transylvania and Roumania ; in the west to the River Tisza (Theiss), in the north to the salt-mines of Maramures, and in the east to the South Bug and Sereth rivers. A large part of Thrace, the Macedonian seaside districts not far from the walls of Salonica, northern Thessaly, Epirus and almost the whole of the Albanian littoral, except Durazzo, belonged to Bulgaria. The Serb lands to the mouth of the Save, Raša, Novi Pazar, Priština and Lipljan on Kosovo Polje, Niš, Braničevo, Požarevac and Belgrade were within Bulgarian territory.

The Arabian writer Al Masudi, who visited Constantinople in the first half of the 9th century, says that the Bulgarian Empire was thirty days' marches long and ten broad. His evidence is confirmed later by William of Tyre, who said that Bulgaria extended from Constantinople to the Danube, and from there to the Adriatic.

The Empire is generally termed the " Bulgar land." The name Bulgaria is very rare in both native and foreign records. It first occurs in translations from the Greek. The form used in

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Byzantium is *Βουλγαρία*, in French *Bulgarie* and in Arabic *Bordjania*. Native records speak of "among the Bulgarians" (*Blgari*), *i.e.*, the land inhabited by Bulgarians. Besides Bulgaria, the name *Zagoria*, *Zagore* or *Zagora* was widely used for the area between the Danube and the Balkan range, the Black Sea and the Timok, *i.e.*, the nucleus of the Empire. The ordinary term in Bulgarian literary works is the Bulgarian Empire, a term which is undoubtedly due to the assumption of the name of Emperor by Simeon and his successors. "Bulgarian Empire" occurs in the chrysobuloi or Golden Bulls.

The name "state" (*država*) originally signified private possession or property, the district ruled over, a sense which it still bears here and there in the vernacular, and which occurs in some old Bulls. This name, in the literal sense *holding* and in the figurative *power*, was subsequently applied to the whole country governed by the prince or ruler. It occurs in the Bulls of Orehov and Rilo.

#### INTERNAL ORGANISATION.

In the earlier period, when the Bulgarian State was founded, it had been divided into territorial units, with tribal or place names. These units had general names: clans (*župa*), districts (*oblast*), villages (*selo*), to which must also be added dukedoms (*voevodstvo*), as many of the clans, being administered by dukes, *i.e.*, military leaders, took the name and passed it on to other divisions. These were purely Slav designations and they never fell out of use. Some of them, for instance dukedom, were even taken over into the administrative terminology of the Turks. Thus many of the Turkish sandjaks kept the old name in the form *vojvodaluk*, and their rulers continued to bear the old Bulgarian name of dukes. One such duke there was even in Constantinople, and to-day in Galata there is a police district called the *Voyvodaluk* and a quarter *Voyvoda-Yokoshu*. The institution of dukedoms occurred in other Slav countries—Russia, Poland and Bohemia. No Turanian name for territorial units is found in the literary records and the chronicles. Byzantine influence afterwards introduced the Greek term *chora*, which is to be met with in all the Bulls, *e.g.*, in the treaty made between Jovan Asen II. and Dubrovnik (*Ragusa*).

The central point of the *župa* or clan was generally found in some fortified village ground, the *grad*. This word must be understood to mean a citadel or fort (*castrum*, *castellum*). In the beginning there were few natural forts. During the period of



settlement, fortresses were built on some ancient—most commonly Roman—site. Fenced round and strengthened, such a *grad* served as a place of refuge in case of attack from outside. Round it spread a *trg* or market-place, and, in Christian times, sometimes also a church. These two additions served to strengthen the *grad* and created a new area, the *podgrad* or suburb, in which was carried on a primitive sort of barter—the beginnings of trade and commerce. The *grad* was inhabited by the clan chief, the ruler, called later a *kephalia* or *katepan* (a metathesis of the word captain).

By Simeon's time there were many such *grads*, and since they were no longer mere forts but inhabited centres, the word had acquired its present sense of city (*civitas*, *ville*, *Stadt*). We may mention the following: the Preslavec of Asparukh, on the Danube between Mačin and Tulča, Pliskov or Pliska-Aboba, Preslav the capital, Dorostol (Silistra), Serdika (Sofia), Boruj (Stara-Zagora), Vilin, Priština, Lipljan, Belgrade, Ohrid (Ochrida), Anchial, Mesemvria, Varna (Odesus), Constanța (Kjustendža), Karbona (now Valčik), Plovdiv (Philippopolis), Skopye (Üsküb), etc. The cities were inhabited by free people: townsmen, artificers, farmers and stockbreeders.

The villages (*selo*) were chiefly noteworthy for their not being fenced round and fortified. The dwellers in them also were free. In both city and village was a market-place, the chief square. The inhabitants lived in cottages and houses, which naturally had broad yards or areas, later called by the Turkish name of *arsa*. In these yards the richer farmers built pretty cottages for their agricultural requirements.

The *katuns* or hamlets differed from the villages in being more scattered and largely inhabited by shepherds and cattle-raisers. Both terms, *selo* and *katun*, occur in the Bulls. The villages were self-governing, and the inhabitants held a common responsibility for all crimes committed within their borders, and had authority over the lands, generally grazing grounds, used by their flocks.

There were villages belonging to the nobles and the monasteries. They were prosperous and the raising of horned cattle and horses was greatly practised. Horses were objects of particular care, being needed for the mounted soldiers and liable to be moved to any area where there was war. The stealing of horses was heavily penalised and their neglect in time of war was criminal.

Development in agriculture kept pace with stock-breeding and, as time went on, became the chief occupation of the people.



## ETHNICAL COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION.

The nucleus was formed by the Slavonic element which rapidly assimilated the proto-Bulgars. It is an untenable theory that the proto-Bulgars continued to lead a separate life, with a distinct language and ethnical character, for centuries, or, as some would have it, up to the conversion to Christianity. The use in the administration of such titles as *khan*, *kavkhan* and *tarkhan* is a mere survival of Asiatic terminology. Some of them are replaced from the 8th century onwards by Slav, and later by Byzantine, terms.

In support of our contention we would refer to the learned and unbiassed Czech historian, Professor Lubor Niederle of Prague, author of *Slav Antiquities* (*Slovanské Starožitnosti*) and universally recognised as the greatest specialist on Slav ethnography and history. Niederle says that the Bulgarians of Asparukh found in the Eastern part of the Peninsula Slavs who " . . . accueillirent les Bulgares comme des auxilliaires contre Byzance, et conclurent avec Asparuch une convention sur la base de laquelle il organisa tout le territoire. . . . L'ancienne organisation slave subsista ; les princes slaves se trouvèrent seulement sous la suprématie du Khakan bulgare. L'assimilation des deux éléments ainsi associés ne tarda pas à se produire. Ce ne furent pas les Slaves qui la subirent, mais les Bulgares. Les souverains bulgares prirent bientôt des noms slaves et abandonnèrent leur langue maternelle pour la slave ; leurs boïars, leur peuple firent de même. . . . C'est ainsi que se constitua dans l'ancienne Mésie un nouvel état, dirigé par les Bulgares turco-tatars, mais ethniquement slave, et cela dès l'origine, de par la majorité de ses sujets. Le caractère slave s'en affermissait et s'approfondissait à mesure que cet état s'accroissait et s'attachait de nouvelles tribus slaves. . . . Cependant les Slaves . . . prenaient conscience peu à peu de leur communauté et leur unité, et ils le manifestèrent en acceptant la dénomination commune de Bulgares. C'est de la sorte que les éléments qui composent la nation bulgare se sont rapprochés et fondus, tout d'abord sur le terrain politique, mais bientôt aussi dans le domaine linguistique et culturel. On ne saurait donc parler d'une dénationalisation, par turquisation, de ces Slaves de l'est de la péninsule ; la part de sang étranger qui s'est mêlée à leur sang slave, et cela seulement dans la Mésie orientale, est trop faible pour les avoir profondément transformés. Les Bulgares sont demeurés des Slaves dans la même mesure que leurs voisins serbes ou que les Russes."

Thus, Asparukh's horde met with the same fate as the Varangians who merged with the Russian tribes or the Franks who assimilated the Gauls. This was inevitable, and it is certain that hardly any traces of the Turanian element remained.

Besides the Bulgarian Slavs, the Empire contained Greeks, who dwelt in the maritime cities ; Vlachs ; Albanians, the descendants of the Illyrians, called by themselves Shqipetars (falcons or eagles), by the Slavs Arbanasi, and by the Greeks Arvaniti, whence the Turkish Arnaut ; some scattered Kumans, probably the ancestors of the Gagauzes ; and Armenians.

The Slav character was too democratic to allow of the existence of any class similar to the Roman serfs. The bulk of the population consisted, as we have seen, of bolyars, farmers, stock-breeders, traders and *paroikoi* ; and there was no such rigid class or caste as existed, for example, in Poland, where the *szlachta* or nobility was a highly privileged and hereditary order.

After the conversion to Christianity the clergy occupied a position analogous to that of the nobles, and these two formed the privileged classes. The word bolyar is derived either from *bolij* or from *boj*. If from the former, the meaning is *better*, if from the latter, *warrior*. In either case there is a suggestion of wealth : the "better man" was better off or richer, and the warrior was influential and rich, thanks to gifts of land received for his bravery in battle. Anyone who rendered valuable service was eligible to become a bolyar, and in consequence a village or clan chief.

The bolyars were divided into greater and lesser bolyars, those of without and those of within. The greater bolyars belonged to the "Bolyar Council," which was similar to the Boyarskaya Duma of the Russian princes. This Council is called by Leo Diakonos and Anna Comnena the *Βουλευτηριον τῶν Σκυθων* or *βουλευτηριον του Συμεονος*, and by some later writers a "*syn-clit*" or senate. When ceremoniously ushered into the presence of the Byzantine Emperor, the greater bolyars were addressed by the Great Logothet, or Byzantine Minister of Foreign Affairs, in the following words : "How fares it with the six great bolyars, and how fares it with the other bolyars (*βολιάδες*), those of without and those of within ?"

The lesser bolyars held less important and less permanent positions in the administration. According to some historians the "Bolyars of within" were recruited from the clans related to Asparukh and his successors. Like the greater bolyars, they had high titles and were entrusted with important commands

by the Khan himself. The "Bolyars of without" probably lived far from the Court and capital and held offices in the semi-autonomous provinces. They enjoyed some sort of independence and their nobility was hereditary. They are the rulers mentioned in the imperial Bulls as "rulers *in* the Empire," as distinct from "rulers *of* the Empire." The Byzantine chronicles call them *Comites* or counts. Whatever the exact facts are, it is clear that these "Bolyars of without" were bound to provide the Prince or Emperor with military detachments in case of foreign attack. They often led their troops in person. Not only did they take part in the Bolyar Council of Twelve which accompanied the ruler, but they were also prominent in the national councils.

The social and economic position of the bolyars varied, for while some of them held big fiefs, others lived very modestly, if not in considerable poverty. The description by John the Exarch, a contemporary of Simeon, of the luxury of the bolyars sitting on both sides of the Sovereign and wearing golden chains, belts and sleeves, refers to the members of the Council of Bolyars.

The higher clergy were socially the equals of the bolyars and in many respects enjoyed greater influence. They were closely attached to the Sovereign, took part in the councils, engaged in special missions, drew up the legal codes and enjoyed the favour of their ruler. Boris and Simeon especially favoured the clergy and treated with particular consideration Bishop Clement of Ochrid, Bishop Constantine and others.

The free class embraced the citizens, the traders, the priests and the villagers—who formed the bulk of the population. The citizens inhabited the towns and were concerned with commerce and trade, but were not ignorant of agriculture and stock-raising. The traders, who lived in the towns, engaged mainly in commerce, which developed very early in Bulgaria, as we know from the fact that in the treaty which Tervel made with Byzantium there were special clauses relating to trade; and Simeon waged war with the Greeks in defence of commercial interests. Bulgaria was the meeting-place of the trade of East and West, and the Bulgarian traders had their offices in a special quarter of Byzantium, where they enjoyed considerable privileges, though under strict supervision. Simeon declared war in 894–95 against Leo VI., who had allowed himself to be persuaded by Greek customs officials to transfer the trade in Bulgarian merchandise from Constantinople to Salonica. This change interfered with the passage of Bulgarian ships from Burgas, Varna and the mouth of the Danube, and the customs officials were free to commit all

kinds of abuses in Salonica, in view of its remoteness from the capital.

The treaties concluded with Dubrovnik by Asen II. and by Michael Asen (1253) show to what an extent trade was fostered by the Bulgarian princes. The treaties prove that Bulgarian merchants were entitled to enter and dwell in Dubrovnik, were exempted from all dues on gates, bridges, roads and fords, and were authorised to export gold, silver and other goods. Mention is made of Bulgarian traders in the Golden Bulls; thus, in the Bull of Rilo, it was laid down that no *kumerk* (toll) should be required when the merchants engaged in trade throughout the Empire. Commerce was especially active in the maritime towns of Thrace and the Black Sea, where the Greeks taught the Bulgarians a more perfect form of exchange operations. All the trade of the West (Germany, Moravia) and of Russia with Asia and Africa passed through Bulgaria.

The rights and duties of the priests were identical with those of other citizens. The office of priesthood descended from father to son—a tradition that was maintained throughout the Turkish suzerainty and which still exists, but there was no suggestion of a close hereditary institution or caste. It was rather the custom for the most suitable young person in a priest's family to be educated for the office. The priests lived in the towns and villages, where they collected their dues and taxes, undisturbed by the village chief. A bishop was even authorised to denounce a *bolyar* for abuses towards a priest.

All the villagers were free, like the townsfolk. They are called *epoikoi* in the Byzantine chronicles. The villagers who dwelt in the free parishes received special attention under Byzantine law and were subject to special orders, as we know from the *Νόμος Γεωργικός*. They were not bound to render any forced labour (*angaria*) on behalf of their overlord, but paid regular dues into the State treasury and carried out such duties to the State as were obligatory on every free citizen. Under some of the Emperors the economic position of the villagers was no better than that of the *paroikoi*, and many of them therefore were glad to exchange their private ownership, which cost them much money and care, for the comparative independence of life in a monastery or on a large estate. There is evidence of this in contemporary chronicles, both native and foreign. It is not surprising in the circumstances, that there were villagers who emigrated into the Byzantine dominions, to which, moreover, they were attracted by promises of an easier life. The Byzantine

chronicles, however, undoubtedly exaggerate the number of emigrants in Simeon's time, ascribing as the reason the oppressive character of his rule.

Those who were economically free consisted of the *paroikoi*, the *otroks*, the dwellers on lands owned by the nobility and the monastic orders, and the technical classes.

There was no slavery in ancient Bulgaria. When we say slavery (*robstvo*) we understand that status bereft of rights which debased a man to the level of an animal or a chattel, as was the case with the slave in ancient Greece and Rome. Such slavery, as an order established by law or an institution of customary law, did not exist in Bulgaria. There are no literary monuments or Bulls mentioning slavery. On the other hand, it is true that the illegal buying and selling of poor children and indigent persons, brought into Bulgaria by foreigners from abroad with a view to speculation, was effected even in Bulgaria. There is historical evidence that slavery did not exist in Bulgaria. Thus, for example, the Emperor Maurice says in his *Strategika* that slavery was unknown among the Balkan Slavs. Freedom was loved and all prisoners of war were set free. This is confirmed by Leo the Philosopher (836-911). That prisoners of war were not made slaves, but were released after being ransomed or having served their term, is proved by the *Z.S.L.* (Article 19). It is true that in the original sources and in general literature, as well as in popular speech, the expression *rob* or *rab*, *robinja* or *rabinja* is to be met with, but this expression denotes either servant, labourer, mechanic or prisoner of war. Foreign sources which speak of Bulgarian *servi* and *servoi rustici* mean *paroikoi*.

The *paroikoi*—in ancient Bulgaria—in Serbia *meropsi*—were the Roman colonists, who had passed on to Bulgarian soil via Byzantium (*παροικος*, pl. *παροικοί*, *coloni*). This institution has in its origin nothing in common with slavery, though some hold it to be evolved from the latter. The difference, both in form and fact, between slaves and *paroikoi* is enormous. The slave was a subject without rights, a chattel, *res*; he had no rights of property, and in general had no political or civil rights, while the *paroikos*, like the *otrok* and the artisan, enjoyed and was entitled to full rights of citizenship. The slave was at the absolute disposition of his master, who had unlimited rights over him and might sell him, give him away or kill him (*jus vitæ necisque*); the *paroikos* was only economically dependent; he was bound to the land of his lord and could not be banished or parted from it. Anyone, even his own overlord, was liable

to punishment for the murder of a *paroikos*. The *paroikos* had his own blood price (Wehrgeld). The slave could not be a witness, go to justice or be a soldier, neither could he be a *pater familias*; the *paroikos* had all these rights.

Certain Serbian legal historians have held that the *otrok* was a kind of serf. A circumstantial and comparative study of the status of *otroks* as defined in Tsar Dušan's Code and the evidence supplied by Byzantine historians—including Justinian's Laws<sup>1</sup>—justify the conclusion that the *otrok* can in no way, any more than the *paroikos*, be compared with a slave in the ancient Greek or Roman sense of the term. Such eminent scholars of the institutions of the ancient Southern Slavs as Ziegel, K. Jireček, Majkov, Krstić, Daničić, have studied this question and are not of the opinion that they resemble slaves. Jireček says that no difference between *paroikos* and *otrok* can be established. Stojan Novaković states, with some reservations, that in actual practice the exact status of the *otrok* is unknown. He was not in any case at the full disposal of his lord.

In Serbian sources the artisans are called masters—*majstor* or *mastor*. They are mentioned in Bulgaria in the Golden Bulls of Oreh, where they are classed together with or after the *paroikoi* and *otroks*. There are no positive data as to the status of these dependents, or how their dependent status came about. Yet if we compare Dušan's Code with certain facts to be found in Byzantine sources, it appears that they were rated higher than the *paroikoi* on the estates of nobles or monasteries, and that they were under the control either of private owners or State officials, in order to prevent them from deriving unfair advantage from their technical knowledge, misuse of which some of them might easily have made, especially goldsmiths, smiths, wainwrights, weavers, potters, etc. In all other respects, artisans should be classed as free men, together with merchants and other citizens.

STEPHEN S. BOBČEV.

<sup>1</sup> According to these regulations, the *otrok* could be ransomed or obtain his freedom by working out his term of three years of service for his patron.